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HOWLAND

PAGE 11.

E. L. Lenoir
P H Œ B E ;

OR,

The Hospital.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE PRIZE,” “MAURICE FAVELL,” “THE PRIMROSES,”
AND OTHER STORIES.



NEW YORK:

GENERAL PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION,

DEPOSITORY 20 JOHN STREET.

1851.

1870

PHŒBE;

OR, THE HOSPITAL.

WILLIAM FREEMAN returned home from his work one evening early in March, and found his wife, who had prepared every thing for his return, looking sad, and as if she had been crying, very different from the fresh, brisk, cheerful manner which he used to reckon upon, when he opened his cottage-door, with as much certainty as the warm fire and comfortable supper.

“What’s the matter, wife?” he began; “is Phœbe worse?”

“No, not worse, I hope,” she replied, “though she has had a sad day of it, poor thing; but the doctor has been here, and he

says he can do no good with her here; that she ought to go to the hospital at N—— if we want her cured, and he says he'll get her in if we like; but oh, William, I can't let her go. What will a poor child like that do without a mother to take care of her? No, I can never let her go."

William sat sad and thoughtful for some time; at last he said: "You see she gets no better; every time I come home at night she looks more pining and wasted than when I left her in the morning, and it's a pity to see such a nice bonny little lass as she was, changed into a poor pale thing, starting and frightened if a dog does but bark, and so worn out by the noises of the other children and baby's crying. I'm sure if they could do her any good, I'd let her go to the hospital; for, take all the care and pains you can, it's clear to me she gets worse instead of better; and pains enough you do take, that is certain,

for you have rest neither night nor day with her."

The conversation lasted some time ; and under her husband's way of looking on the subject, the poor anxious mother began to make up her mind, that if it could be proved really for her child's good, she would part with her, and commit her to the care of strangers. It is not necessary to explain all that passed ; the doctor repeated his assurance to William Freeman, and it was settled at last, that on the following Monday Phoebe should be taken to the hospital. The town was six miles off ; but William Freeman did not think much of this distance, though with his little girl in his arms. It made him sad, indeed, to think, as he started on the journey, how slight her weight was, and how small a burden and hindrance.

Phoebe, as her father said, had been, till the last few months, a fine, healthy child ; but

an illness then came upon her which defied all home-treatment, and all the receipts of the most experienced neighbors, and even did not give way under the doctor's remedies, who explained to her father, that she needed some most expensive medicines, and also other things which, situated as they were, it would be impossible for them to provide for her. The poor child was sorry to leave home, and felt grieved at her mother's distress at parting from her, but she was too uncomfortable and ill in her own feelings to be able to enter thoroughly into what was passing, and the promise held out to her of getting better, reconciled her to a good deal.

"Don't cry, mother," she said; "perhaps I shall come back again quite well;" but her smile was so faint and languid as she spoke, that her mother found it harder than ever to restrain her tears.

Her last care had been to wrap the poor

child up in every warm thing the house contained, and so defended, she reached the town without feeling much of the keen March wind.

The hospital at N—— was a large building on the outskirts of the town, and thither her father made his way at once. It was Monday morning and the time for receiving patients, and Phoebe felt rather frightened and bewildered when her father set her down in the midst of a little crowd of sick people collected there from different parts of the country in the same hope of relief. She had presently to go through the further alarm of being examined and questioned by the physician; and after this was over, she was given into the charge of a nurse, and told to go up stairs, where she would be instructed where to go and what to do. The time had now come for her father to take leave of her, and then it did seem a hard thing to him to say good-bye to his little girl of but nine years old, and leave her amongst

strangers. He felt no doubt, however, that he was doing right, and besides he was comforted by the doctor's kind manner, and the nurse's promises of attention; so he kissed little Phœbe, and was able to conceal from her the sadness that was in his heart while he did so. The poor child saw him go before she fully understood what had happened; for she was confused by the new and strange scene, and besides felt weak and ill after her journey. It was not thought necessary for her to go to bed, or to be confined to her own ward, so she was taken to what is called the convalescent room, that is, the room where those who are getting better, or who are not bad enough to be obliged to lie in bed in the day-time, spend their time. Several women were there, and two or three quite young people; but none so young as she was. Most of them looked very pale and sickly to Phœbe, who had never seen much of illness, and the whole place, she thought, seemed

strange and dull. Some few were engaged in needle-work, and some were reading books, their Bibles and Prayer-books, or others that the clergyman had provided for them; but few sick people can either read or work for long at a time; so that generally the women were resting themselves on the seats and long settles, or talking now and then to one another in a low voice. Phoebe was suffered to take her place among them without much notice; probably they thought she would rather not have any attention paid her, for she sat herself down in a corner as soon as she could, as if wishing to avoid observation. This first day seemed very long; the only things to make a change to her were, first, dinner, which she could not eat, and then a dose of very bitter medicine, which she contrived to swallow with less difficulty than she usually made at home, because she feared to draw attention upon her by making a fuss about it; and last came tea,

which she found very refreshing. The nurse then took her to her *ward*; for this is the name of the bedrooms at a hospital; and showed her which bed was to be hers. It looked very clean and comfortable; and after a long and weary day Phœbe felt glad and thankful to lie down to rest once more. As she knelt down and said her prayers, it made her feel less lonely to think that her mother would pray for her too that night, and in this thought she fell more soundly asleep than she had often done lately.

She did not wake again till the middle of the night, when the restless feelings of her illness generally came most strongly upon her; and she was beginning to call out for her mother to come to her, as she was used to do, when the thought rushed upon her mind that her mother was far, far away, and that she was amongst strangers. Poor child! it was more than she could bear at such a time; for who does not

know what feelings of fear and distress and alarm will often crowd upon the mind at night, which the day shows to be unreasonable and vain? She was ill too, and at that moment thought herself even more ill than she was; and the end was, that after a frightened glance round the dimly-lighted room, she gave way to a flood of tears, which, when once begun, she could not stop, and which almost threatened to get beyond her control. At this moment some one in the farthest bed, who till then seemed to have been asleep, rose up and throwing a large cloak round her, approached the bedside of the poor disconsolate child. This was Mary Grey, a young woman who had been for some time a patient in the house, and who had observed Phoebe from her first arrival, but being a shy, retired person, had not liked to be the first to take notice of her. But now when she heard her distress, she willingly rose from her bed, in no ill humour though roused from a comfortable

sleep which she much needed, and went to try what she could do to soothe and comfort her. At the same time a voice from the opposite side of the room cried out, in peevish tones:—

“Oh! for goodness’ sake stop that child; it’s bad enough when one is well to have their crying and noise, but when one is ill, it’s past all bearing;” then raising herself with a sudden, impatient movement, as her first complaint did not seem to be attended to, she added, “Do be quiet, I tell you; do you think nobody is ill but yourself?”

This angry appeal did Phœbe good so far, that it roused her and stopped her tears, from very surprise: she had in fact hitherto been allowed to give way to her feelings far too much for her own good, her mother having been always too patient and forbearing to like to use any authority. She had considered, justly enough, that such attacks were caused by illness, and so must be excused; but she

had not thought sufficiently, that though excusable, it was the worst possible thing for the child to be allowed to indulge in them; and so it happened that Phoebe had never received such a check before, and the effect was certainly good upon her, for she was silent at once. In this moment Mary Grey came softly up to her, and speaking to her in a kind voice, asked her what was the matter that she cried so sadly; and gently reminded her at the same time, by way of explaining the angry voice from the corner, that other people were ill too, and that it was not kind or right to disturb them more than could be helped. Phoebe felt the reasonableness of this, and besides was comforted by Mary's soft, gentle voice, and by the thought that a kind person was near her; and after answering her questions in as calm and quiet a manner as she could, she promised to try to go to sleep, and resolutely shut her eyes

to do so. Mary still sat on the bed, and Phoebe was glad for her to be there. While her eyes were closed, she could almost fancy it her mother still at hand; but another minute or two reminded her that it would be very selfish of her to allow her new friend to tire herself only to please her fancy, so she begged her to leave her, and promised she should not be disturbed any more; and this was whispered so gently and softly, that the sleeper in the other corner (for the angry voice had fallen asleep again) could not be roused by it; and with this promise Mary returned to her little bed, and in another hour all in the room were again at rest.

The next day the acquaintance thus begun between Phoebe and Mary Grey made considerable progress. Phoebe naturally felt anxious to see her new friend by daylight, to judge if she liked her appearance as well as her soft voice and kind words. And she was

not disappointed; for Mary was certainly a very pleasing-looking person, fair and modest, and quiet in all her motions. There was only one drawback to the pleasure of looking at her; but that was a sad one. Mary was very pale; and often she would start and put her hand to her side or her head, as if struck with a sudden attack of pain. When the doctor of the house, too, came up to her and made his usual inquiries, he looked serious and grave, so that Phoebe, who was by, felt sure he thought her very ill. Perhaps Mary thought so too, but it did not make any difference in her manner; and when he had passed on, she turned again to Phoebe as calmly and quietly as before, and encouraged her to go on with what she was saying. You may fancy what a relief it was to Phoebe to be able to talk of home and all that interested her. There was a danger, indeed, of her talking too much and too long; but Mary

perceived that she looked tired and excited before she was aware of it herself, and advised her to go and lie quietly on the bed for a little while, which she did. She made as little noise as possible; for the owner of the angry voice in the corner, whose name was Hannah Sanders, was still there, not having risen with the others. Her appearance, however, was not very alarming; she was, in fact, rather a pretty young woman, with no look of particular ill health about her, nor of ill humour now the night was over. She asked Phoebe some questions, as to who was in the great room, &c.; but as she had not yet become acquainted with many names, she could not satisfy her curiosity. When she lay down she felt very restless and poorly, but kept as quiet as she could, took the medicine that was brought her, and had sunk to sleep when she was roused by voices near her. It was Hannah Sanders conversing with

a friend out of the town, who had come to pay her a visit. They were talking over the inmates of the house, and Phoebe paid little attention to their conversation till she heard the name of Mary Grey. The new comer seemed to know her, and spoke well of her.

“I’m sorry she should be ill, poor thing,” she said ; “she seems so friendless, having neither father nor mother belonging to her, and so steady and thoughtful as she is. What is the matter with her?”

“Oh ! I don’t know,” answered Hannah ; “she looks like a ghost, and I don’t think the doctors can do her any good. It’s my opinion that it’s something they can do nothing with that makes her ill.”

“What can you mean ?” said the other, with some curiosity.

“Well, I think she takes William’s conduct to heart. You know they were to have been married long before this, and now he has left

the town; he went off with some excuse about seeking for work elsewhere, and she has heard nothing of him for months."

"Indeed," said the friend; "well, I should have thought better of him than to think he would do such a thing—such a steady young man and punctual at his church as he was!"

"Well I don't see such great harm," added the other; "she is so quiet and formal in her ways, that I dare say he got tired of it; and besides, she was beginning to be sickly and poorly; and what can a poor man do with a sickly wife? I did hear that William is courting another young woman. I asked Mary about it the other day, for I thought it would do her good to know every thing, and would set up her spirit. She said nothing, and looked as cool as she could, as if she cared nothing about it; but I could see she had heard it before."

"She is better a great deal without him, if he

is such a one as you think," said the friend in some indignation, "and a girl of her sense will think so, I hope."

Soon after, the visitor left, and Phoebe remained in silence to ponder over what she had heard, and to grieve over Mary's state of health that all seemed to think so ill of. She was full of these feelings when she next saw Mary; but then she looked so calm and easy, thought so little of herself, and seemed so glad to help others who needed help, that it was impossible not to think better of her case.

Hannah Sanders came into the convalescent room at the same time with Phoebe. She was fast recovering, and was in high spirits and full of pleasure at the thought of leaving. She talked a great deal about herself to Mary, who seemed a kind listener to every body, and described all the places she had been at in a way that amused Phoebe a good deal, who had never before been in the way of hearing such talk:

but though she was amused, she could not like Hannah very much, and she was therefore quite puzzled to hear from her what a high value all her friends and the mistress whom she was with, seemed to have for her; and Phœbe could not, in spite of herself, help feeling respect for a person who, by her own account, could do so many things better than any body else; who was so trustworthy, and thoughtful, and handy, and industrious, that no one ever could be found to supply her place. It must be very nice, thought Phœbe, to be so well thought of, and to do so many things well; but I wonder she should like to talk of it. Then she began to wish Mary would begin to tell something about herself, and was half inclined to be vexed at first that she had nothing to boast of in return. But Mary listened very quietly, and did not seem at all inclined to interrupt or take her share in the conversation, till Han-

nah began to reflect on the treatment she had received in the house.

"She could not say that she had been attended to as she had expected, and indeed she had a good many things to complain of."

"Have you?" said Mary very gently. "Well, you have a home and plenty of places to go to, and I suppose that makes you particular; but it is different with me, and I never can be thankful enough for all the care and kindness I have found here. It makes my heart full whenever I think of it. I am sure that Mr. Maynard (the house-surgeon) cares as much about us, and that every thing we take should do us good, as if we were his children."

"You may be a favourite," answered the other: "but I must say for myself, that he will never hear half I have got to say, but seems in such a hurry."

"At least," said Mary, with a smile, "he

has done you good, he and all the doctors together; for you don't look like the same person you were when you came in."

"Yes," answered Hannah; "but there are not many with such a constitution as I have. I go out next Monday," she continued, after a little pause; "how long do you stay?"

"I don't know yet," Mary replied; "not very much more, I am afraid."

"Oh dear," exclaimed Hannah, "I shall be so glad to get away!"

"Yes, because you are nearly well, and will be able to take your place directly; but I, you know, I have nobody near belonging to me, and I can't think of being a burden to any one, though nobody can be a kinder friend than Ellen Swain."

"Ah! that's she you used to lodge with," said the other carelessly; and something coming to interrupt them, the conversation ended.

One of the chief subjects of interest amongst the women in the convalescent room was the sad case of a poor little boy, who had been brought into the hospital some days before Phoebe came there, on having met with a dreadful accident in the mill in which he was working, by which his leg was so seriously injured, that the surgeons had found it necessary to take it off immediately. There had happened at the time of his admission to be a woman in the hospital who knew the poor boy, from having lived in the same court with his parents, and who could, therefore, tell a good deal about him; and this, of course, had made her anxious to learn all she could of his case from the nurse who attended upon him. The account she heard was not very satisfactory. The nurse had described him as having borne the operation with great courage—"like a man," as she said, "without shedding a tear, or giving way under the

worst pain." All this sounded well; but he had been throughout sullen and discontented: his misfortune seemed to harden his heart, so that he turned away from words of kindness, and appeared only anxious to be unnoticed, showing especial annoyance when people expressed before him the pity and compassion which all must feel for a child under such circumstances. This frame of mind injured his health, and at first even threatened his life. However, in spite of it, he was now considered out of danger, and was slowly recovering. These particulars Phoebe gathered from a conversation between her friend Mary Grey and the woman before-mentioned, both of whom made many natural reflections on the sad state of mind the unhappy boy seemed to be in.

"Such a trouble must be bad indeed to bear," said Mary, "if he does not know Who sends it to him."

“There it is,” said her companion ; then lowering her voice for Mary alone to hear, —“ One does not like to speak against one’s neighbors, but the truth is, he was ill taught before he came here. He has no mother of his own, poor thing, and was sent to the mills before he was fit for it, by his step-mother, who thought him an incumbrance that she would get rid of as soon as she could.”

“Poor thing!” said Mary; “and what will become of him now, when he is likely to be an incumbrance all his life?”

In the mean time Phœbe was improving in her health every day, and the sense of returning strength made her very happy, though in the place where she had at first felt so dreary ; and no wonder : indeed, she would have thought herself quite ungrateful if it had been otherwise, for all the people were kind to her, and she well knew that

every thing was done that could be done for her comfort and amendment.

As the weather was now very mild and fine, she was allowed to go out into the grounds belonging to the hospital every day about noon; and though these were not so pretty and cheerful as the fields and nice cottage-gardens of her own village, she quite enjoyed the change after being so long confined within doors; and as she watched the young leaves opening out on the shrubs, and felt the soft wind blowing upon her, she thought that she should soon be well and be able to return home, brought feelings of joy that she had never known before. However, she was not yet strong enough for much exertion, and a little walking made her tired, so that she was glad to turn for a rest towards a sheltered arbour, which had been placed for the comfort of the patients near the gravel-walk laid out for their exercise-

ground. She was not aware that any one was seated there before she came close up to it, and then she found it occupied already by a little boy of about eleven years old. He looked very pale, but it was not his paleness that struck her so much as the look of misery and wretchedness that was expressed in his thin features. Another glance showed her the poor mutilated limb; and she had no doubt of its being poor Simon Milford, of whom she had so often heard. Her first impulse was to turn back; but her next thought was, that he might think she shrunk from him, and she stood still and irresolute. He had, however, been quick to observe her first movement, and to give the meaning to it she had feared; and exclaiming, in a hurried tone, "You needn't go! I'm going myself!" he began hastily to feel about for his crutches. However, he was not yet accustomed to the use of them; and in his impa-

tient tremour, let both fall to the ground, thus leaving himself helpless. Phoebe ran to pick them up, saying, at the same time, "There is room enough on this great bench for us both; but if you would rather I went away, I will go."

"It is no matter to me," he answered, sullenly; however, as he made no further attempt to rise, being, perhaps, vexed at having to show his awkwardness before a stranger, Phoebe sat down to rest at the other end of the bench, and both remained silent for some time. At length, Phoebe, whose mind was dwelling on his terrible misfortune, could not help saying, "I am very sorry for you; it must be very bad to bear."

Simon shrunk at hearing her words, and exclaimed, hastily, "Don't speak of it; don't look at me; I can't bear it."

"Have I vexed you?" Phoebe answered, timidly; "I'm sure I did not mean it."

"Every body vexes me that pities me," he answered; "I want nobody to take any notice of me again as long as I live."

"Oh, you won't think so when you get home!" exclaimed Phoebe; "you are strange here, that's the reason; but when you are with your mother again, you'll feel happier."

"I have no mother," he answered, gloomily.

"No mother!" she cried, in a tone of sorrowful pity.

"My mother died before I was six years old," he continued; "I've a step-mother now."

Phoebe made no answer; she was thinking over what he had said, when he went on as if talking to himself. "A fine nuisance I shall be thought when I get home again. I suppose they'll get me into the workhouse if they can."

"Oh, no," cried Phoebe, "they'll never be so cruel as to send you away."

"Why, perhaps, I shall be better there than any where else," he replied. "I sha'n't

have all the boys staring and laughing at me whenever I put my face out of the door, nor see them play myself."

"Oh, how can you have such thoughts!" Phoebe exclaimed. "Nobody in the world would laugh at such trouble as yours."

"Won't they?" he answered, with a sort of contempt. "I know I've laughed at old Joe Thompson's wooden leg many a time; and what's the difference between him and me now? no doubt they have a right to do it."

Phoebe said nothing. There was something in his way of talking that she did not like, and she was wishing for a good excuse for going away without giving offence. Simon, perhaps, observed the effect of what he had been saying; for, as if defending himself, he continued, "Why, have not I enough to make me cross and vexed?"

"Oh, yes," she replied; "nobody knows

how they could bear such a trouble ; but you seem to like to think most of the things that vex you ; now, you know, people who know best, say, the worst things happen for our good."

"Oh, yes," he answered, very impatiently ; "so people talk who have no trouble of their own ; but how can it be for my good to lose my leg, and to be a helpless, useless cripple all my life—a burden to people who will want me out of their way?"

Simon began his speech in anger, but as he counted up his ill prospects and his troubles, his courage gave way, and he burst into tears.

"How I wish Mary Grey was here!" exclaimed Phœbe ; "she would know how to comfort you, I am sure ; and I don't know what to say. And she has troubles of her own, though not quite like yours, yet she is contented and thankful for every thing."

“Don’t tell her of my being such a fool here,” said Simon, in alarm; “and look, they are coming to call us in to dinner;” and, as if glad to end the conversation, he began to prepare himself for the painful walk.

It was a good sign, however, that he suffered Phœbe to help him, by holding his crutches till he was able to take them, and even to mutter “thank you,” when she had done; though a good deal as if he was ashamed of being so civil.

A day or two after this, Phœbe received a visit from some of her friends who had come that morning from her own village. They brought her a message from her mother that she had not felt strong enough to walk over to see her, and that her father had been unusually busy; but she sent her love, and a fine nosegay that the children had gathered to show they thought of her. Phœbe’s eyes glistened at the sight of the beautiful flowers,

and at the thought of those who had gathered and sent them, and still more so when she heard the doctor tell her friends that her mother might come for her in ten days' time, unless she heard to the contrary; for that if Phoebe went on as well as she had done lately, she would be quite fit to leave the hospital by that time.

Her visitors could not stay very long; and when they left, Phoebe went to the garden as usual, carrying her precious nosegay with her, her heart quite dancing with pleasure at all the thoughts it had brought with it. Suddenly, however, she remembered her good friend Mary Grey, and generously resolved to make her a present of her beautiful flowers. It was a *little* sacrifice, but one she joyfully made. And she turned back to find her friend. She ran up to her on finding her alone.

"Look here!" she exclaimed; "here is something to do you good: smell how sweet!"—turn-

ing the violets, that clustered at the bottom of the nosegay, towards her. "Take them—they come fresh from our garden, and you shall have them all."

Here she stopped short; for she saw Mary was in tears.

"Thank you, dear," she answered; "they are very beautiful, but I won't deprive you of them."

"Oh, don't say so!" exclaimed Phœbe; "if you think them pretty, pray take them."

"They are too pretty and sweet for me," said Mary, with a sad smile: "my head is so bad this morning, that I can hardly look at any thing, and the sweet scent seems too much for me. Look, I will take these nice fresh primroses, and thank you for them, and you shall keep the rest. Why, they seem to have done you good already: I never saw you with such a colour; and I am sure you are nothing like so thin as when you first came in."

“Oh, no,” answered Phoebe, “I feel so different; and I’m to leave next Saturday but one, and go home again to them all. But oh, Mary, I shall be sorry to leave you, and so ill as you seem just now. I thought you were a great deal better.” And the tears came into her eyes.

“I shall leave at the same time,” said Mary; “and I *am* better, only my head aches just now.”

“And where will you go?” asked Phoebe: “is it anywhere where I can come to see you some times?”

“No, my dear, I am afraid not,” said Mary; and, for a moment, a flush came over her face as she continued, “I have no home to go to like yours, and I am not strong enough yet to work for my living: I shall have to go to the poor-house.”

“Ah, and it is that that makes you cry,” said Phoebe, sorrowfully; “I am so sorry.”

“Yes, my dear, I can’t help taking it a little to heart more than I ought; for I dare say I

shall have as kind treatment there as here, and it is God's will that I should be destitute. I wish to feel thankful that there is such a shelter for me."

Phœbe's mind wandered to what she had heard from Hannah, and a thought suddenly struck her; and, lowering her voice, she said, "Hannah Sanders will be here very soon—I saw her coming this way: don't let her see you have been crying; she will think it is about something quite different."

"*What* will she think?" said Mary, with some curiosity.

Phœbe felt she had gone too far, and would have gladly been silent; but Mary urged her, and soon drew from her the gossip that had passed within her hearing.

It seemed to move Mary, for a few moments, a good deal; but soon she spoke very calmly: "Hannah Sanders was quite mistaken about me. My illness would have come upon me

just the same if I had been in the greatest prosperity and with every thing I could desire about me; and nothing else has had to do with it."

"Oh, then it's all a mistake about William Johnson. I'm so glad!" cried Phoebe.

"It is all a mistake, I think, about William Johnson being the sort of person she fancies," answered Mary; "but it is better you should not think of such foolish gossip, my dear: and you will do me a kindness to bring me a sheet of paper from my box, as I want to write a letter."

Phoebe soon got the paper, pen, and ink; and after she had seen that the pen would mark and the ink was not too thick, she followed her original intention, and set off with her flowers for a walk in the grounds, leaving Mary to herself, as she saw she desired to be.

It cost Mary some trouble to write; for her head ached, and the subjects of her letter were

painful to her: but she knew it must be done, and had best be done soon. It was to her friend Ellen Swain, in answer to one she had received from her that morning, and was as follows:—

“DEAR ELLEN,—Thank you for your letter, which has been a great comfort to me at a time I wanted comfort. As for myself, though there has been no great change, yet I fancy myself better, rather than worse. I pressed Dr. B—— to tell me what he thought of my case, and hoped he would be quite plain with me; and he said he thought the worst of my illness was over; but he could not tell how long it would be before I can hope to be well and strong; at the best, he says, I shall mend but slowly, and I shall not be able to take to my work again for a good while. It is about this that I wish to write to you, dear Ellen, and to tell you that I have made up my mind to go into the poor-house. I can never be grateful enough to you

and your kind husband for wishing to take in a poor ailing creature as I am, and to do for me and provide for me till I get better; the tears come into my eyes when I think of it; but you have children of your own, and I should be glad to think that you were laying up for them what little you could spare against an evil day—though long may it be kept from you; and I believe it would be a weight on me, that would prevent my getting well, to feel myself a burden, though well I know you would not think me one. I won't deny that it has been a struggle to me to submit to this; but surely it is God's will: and I am ashamed of my proud heart, which made the thought hard to bear at first; but it is so no longer, and I feel far happier to have made up my mind.

“There was but one part of your letter that troubled me: it was the anger you express against William Johnson. I can't explain his conduct any more than you; but I will always

believe that some mistake is at the bottom of his change, though we may never know what it is. We both have known him from a boy, and how good and steady he always was. Is it likely he should turn bad all at once? It would be worse than any thing that has happened to me to have to think it. And having said this, dear Ellen, you would confer a great kindness on me never to name the subject to me again. I am quite sure it does harm to talk much on such matters; and it is for the good of my body, and mind too, to keep my thoughts as calm and peaceful as I can: and if I do but learn to set my mind on right things, then every thing that happens to me—trouble, or sickness, or sorrow—will be all for my good.

“I am to leave this place Saturday week: it is a bad day for you to leave home upon; yet I think you will be so good as to come for me here, and walk with me to the union-house at once. I should not know what to say to the

gentlemen by myself. My kind love to your husband and the children.

“Your affectionate friend,

“MARY GREY.”

In the mean while Phoebe took her walk in the grounds, and when tired went to rest in the arbour. She had not been there long when Simon came up, a little disconcerted, perhaps, to see her, but not enough to make him turn back; so he took his seat in silence at the other end of the bench. Phoebe, too, was silent, for their last conversation had made her afraid of him; so she smelt her nosegay and examined the different flowers that she might seem to have something to do. The nosegay was certainly well worth looking at, for its own beauty as well as for the thoughts it brought along with it. High above all the rest were a profusion of daffodils, fresh and bright, surrounded by dark rich-smelling wall-flowers; next came wild anemones, primroses, southern-

wood, and, what Phœbe prized much, some deep-edge polyanthus; and clustering at the bottom, choice double daisies, and violets, blue and white, sweeter than all the rest.

"Those are nice flowers," said Simon at last, to Phœbe's great surprise, for she did not think he would care for them.

"Yes," said she, gladly; "should you like to have some?" and she placed them in his hand.

He gladly took them, and buried his face among the flowers, as if eager to breathe in their sweetness. At length he said: "It is long since I held such a nosegay in my own hand: it makes me think of when I was quite a little fellow, and used to go into the fields and bring home as many daffodils as my two hands would hold. We lived in the country then."

"There are not many fields of daffodils," said Phœbe.

"There was one at Marsden, however," he answered.

"Why, Marsden!" cried Phoebe; "that is close where we live. I did not know we had been neighbours."

"Ah! it's a long while ago," said Simon, sighing. "Mother was alive then; and I often can't think I am the same boy I was when she used to take me to church with her, and teach me to say my prayers; and when I used to play about the lanes and garden."

"And why did you leave such a nice place?" asked Phoebe.

"Father thought we should do better," he replied, "in a town, and that there would be work for the children; so we came to N——. But it was a bad change, as it happened; for mother was never strong, and she got worse in the town, and died in less than a year."

"Oh, what a loss for you!" cried Phoebe, in a compassionate tone.

"You may well say so," he answered, gloomily. "Every thing has gone wrong

since ; and worst of all with me. For my father soon married again ; and she never took to me. She was not like *my* mother, but sharp and cross ; and I vexed her by some things I said, and so she has never liked me. And father takes notice of what she says against me, as I don't deny I may sometimes try to provoke her by talking how differently my own mother treated me. But I did not mind while I was able to work ; for I knew I should earn more every year, and could soon take care of myself ; it is different now !" His voice faltered as he spoke. " But," said he, rousing himself, " all this has come of these flowers, which made me think of Marsden. It is odd that you should know the place."

" It is not a mile from our house," she answered ; " and I often go there with mother." This led to their recalling together all the people at Marsden that both knew ; and in such talk, and the pleasure of going back to

the happiest and best part of his life, Simon was more cheerful than he had been for many a day. It was a subject, too, that opened Phoebe's little heart to him; and she talked away, and found herself in full description of the sports of next May-day, before she reflected that such a subject might be rather a sad one to him. He would not let her stop, however, though he understood her thought; for he liked to be reminded of all that happened at those merry times, which he could hardly recollect by himself. But together they could go through it all, from the day before, the last day of April, when all the flowers that could be found in field and garden were gathered, and laid by in water for the next morning, to the happy moment when the last flower was placed on the garland by the cleverest and most experienced of the party. Then both related together how the May-morning was spent in going from house to house to display

the beautiful garland, while they sung the May-day song, and collected from all the neighbours who were kind enough to contribute halfpence to their little feast.

“And you forget church in the morning,” said Phoebe.

“I don’t think they went to church at Marsden,” said Simon.

“Oh, but they do with us. And Mr. Osborne, our clergyman, likes to see us there. He says holydays are given that we may be happy, and thank God for it; and May-day is one of the holydays in the Prayer-book,* and that is why we keep May-day.”

Simon sighed. “Mother used to take me to church while she lived; and I used to like to go with father afterwards; but since he married again, he has not cared to go like what he used to do; he says he’s tired, and lies in

* It is called there St. Philip’s and St. James’-day.

bed on Sunday morning ; and so I have not been either."

"What, don't you go to church on Sunday?" cried Phoebe. "Oh! that is very wrong of you. Why don't you go to the Sunday-school, and go along with all the other boys?"

"Well, father always talked of sending me. But the boys in our yard used to go out in the fields, and I went with them; and we used to have fine fun sometimes, such as I can never have again. But if ever I heard the church-bells ringing, though we were ever so merry, the thought of my mother holding my hand, as she used to do, and taking me to church, used to come into my mind, and take away all the pleasure. And often and often I would have left them all, and walked off to church at once, only I was afraid they would laugh at me; and so I was ashamed."

"That was a pity," said Phoebe, very

seriously; and she was silent for a few moments. Then, in a timid tone, she said: "I should like to tell you what I have been thinking about; but will you be angry?"

"I don't know what it is," he replied, with a faint smile; "but I'll try not."

"Well, I have been thinking this," she answered: "that though yours is such a very bad misfortune, yet there is one thing that may be good in it. You can't go out now with those naughty boys who laugh at people for being good, and perhaps you will go to church instead."

"Well, but I could have gone to church if I had liked before," he replied.

"Yes, but then you did not like, and now perhaps you will. Those boys won't be such a temptation to you. You will like to keep out of their way. And besides, when you are at church, you will hear about heaven, and you will like to hear of it, and will get not to mind

your troubles here, so you can get there at last."

"I have thought so little about right things," said Simon, with a sigh, "that I seem hardly to understand you. But I do believe that I should be much happier if such thoughts were in my mind. Only, what am I to do? I should not know where to begin."

Phoebe could not tell him exactly: she knew she was too young to be able to give advice. But they both continued talking some time longer. It did Simon good to open his mind and heart, as he did then; and though Phoebe was too little to be a teacher, yet he could see by every word she said that she was a good little girl, anxious to do and say what was right. Simon began to be sorry he had said some of the things he had before her, and feared she would dislike him for it; for he saw how different her ways of thinking were from what his had been. He felt anxious she should

think more favourably of him; and though this was not a very high motive, it was a worthier one than had moved him amongst his old bad companions; so that he really was in a better frame of mind after the conversation than before, though there was danger of the improvement not lasting long.

Phoebe told Mary Grey what they had been talking of, which she listened to with kind interest. Phoebe wished she would talk to Simon; but Mary promised to do a better thing, and mention him to Mr. Day, the clergyman of the hospital, who was very constant in his attendance, and was particularly kind to Mary. Simon had always shown himself so dull and stupid to this gentleman, for fear he should begin to talk to him on a subject he dreaded, that he had never been able to get at his feelings; but when Mary told him what she knew, he was glad to make a further attempt, and this time with better success, for the poor

boy was in a more humble frame of mind, glad of instruction, and ready to receive it. And though he still continued to grieve and fret over his misfortune, and look with dread towards his future life, it was not in a sullen or discontented spirit. He was weak and helpless, and without friends to care much for him; and we cannot wonder that his spirits should be borne down, and that he should feel sad and depressed. But in the midst of his troubles he listened to what Mr. Day said to him, was attentive at prayers, and did his best to understand what he heard and read; and was so much more civil and thankful for the kindness he received and the attention that was paid to him, that the good nurse was quite delighted in the change.

Meantime the important Saturday was approaching. Phœbe felt so well that she was glad to be allowed to make herself useful in doing little errands for the nurse, or helping

Mary in her sewing for the house; for Mary, though often a great sufferer, was always glad to do what she could to assist when at all able to do so. At these times, when they were sitting comfortably together, Phœbe used to do her best to amuse Mary, and make her forget, what she never could quite forget herself, that her kind friend had rather a sad prospect before her; and that the day of parting, which would bring so much pleasure to Phœbe, would be sad indeed to Mary.

At last it came. Phœbe was busy early in the morning making up her little bundle of clothes, before her mother came for her, that then she might have nothing to do but take leave of her many friends in the hospital; for she had been such a good, obliging child, that she was a general favourite. Mary, too, had her preparations to make, and then quietly sat down to expect Ellen Swain, still busy with some needlework the nurse had given her to

do, and glad to keep mind, as well as body, as quiet and calm as possible. Phoebe, too, every now and then sat down by her; but she was too restless to settle for more than five minutes in any one place.

“I should like you to see Mother,” she began, “if only she comes for me; and Mother must see Simon, because he used to live quite close by our village. I’ll just go and see if any body’s come yet.”

And so saying, she ran, for the sixth time at least, to peep down the staircase, and see if there were any arrivals in the lobby below. A few people were there, though none she recognised.

But the porter caught sight of her:—“Here, you little girl, can you tell Mary Grey she’s wanted? Here’s a young man just come for her.”

Phoebe flew back with her message.

“A young man?” said Mary. “It must be Ellen’s brother. I wish she could have come

herself: but I knew it was an inconvenient day for her."

And she stepped down stairs at once, accompanied by Phoebe, to tell her guide she would get ready as quickly as possible. They had nearly reached the bottom of the stairs, and Phoebe's eyes had wandered off in search of new arrivals, when she felt her companion catch hold of her arm, as if to support herself. "O Mary, you are ill!" cried Phoebe, observing that her countenance had changed; but then following the direction of her eyes, she observed a person advancing hastily towards them, exclaiming, "O Mary, here you are at last!" Her short answer, "William, how did you come here?" explained it all to Phoebe. It was William Johnson himself, looking so glad and so sorry, so overjoyed to see Mary again, and so grieved to find her in such a place, thin and pale, and altered; that in the confusion of such feelings he could do

nothing to explain why he was there, nor why he had delayed coming so long. After the first moment, however, Mary looked perfectly calm and composed, though Phoebe could still feel her hand tremble. "I expected Ellen Swain," she continued; "I am sorry you should have come here."

"Sorry I should have come!" he exclaimed. "Why, who should help you but me?"

"Do not speak so loud," said Mary. "See, those people are looking at us."

"Well, well, never mind them," he answered hastily, lowering his voice, however, at the same time. "Ellen Swain will be here directly. I only ran on and got here a few minutes before her, for she has her baby to carry. She and I have talked over this mistake together, and found out how it all happened. It has made me a great deal more miserable than ever it has made you, I am afraid; but if ever I can find the heap of letters

I have written to you, that through Ellen Swain's change of house you never got, (more shame to the blundering of those that kept them,) I'll make you read them for a punishment. Thank you for that smile; it makes you look more like what you used to do; but you are better, Mary, really better, Mary, are you not? I wish you did not look so thin; but we'll get you better," he continued, hopefully. "Come, where is your bonnet, that we may set off? Ellen will be here by the time you are ready."

"Oh, but, William, do you know where we are to go?" cried Mary. "Did Ellen tell you?"

"Why, to her house, to be sure," he exclaimed: "where else?"

"Oh, no," she answered; "Ellen knows that I intend to go to the union."

"The union! O Mary!—but however," he added, swallowing as if to get rid of some painful feeling, "when Ellen comes, you will see

that we have settled all about it. Trust her, if you won't trust me. O Mary! indeed it is not my fault that you have been left poor and destitute all this while; only come and I will explain all to you, if only we can get out of this place."

"Don't speak in that way, please," said Mary, "of a place that has been a kind home to me so long. I can never be thankful enough for what has been done for me here."

"And I am thankful too," said William, "and grateful to those who have helped you; only just now I seem hardly to know what I say."

At this moment Ellen Swain entered, carrying her great baby, which would have been an excuse for a longer delay. She greeted Mary with an affectionate smile before they were near enough to speak, and soon they fell into an earnest whispered conversation, in which William seemed to feel he had better not join. He

stood by, looking rather anxious and impatient, until Mary at length observed it, and, turning to him, said, as if finishing her conversation, "Well, then, I will come—I won't keep you long;" and she returned with Phœbe up stairs. Phœbe had heard most of what had passed, and had wondered within herself how quiet and composed Mary seemed. She did not seem so happy as she expected; however, she could not help saying, "Well, I am glad you are not going to the union; are not you, Mary?"

"Do not speak to me, please, dear," said Mary, hastily; "I am not fit for talking just now."

"Well, but, Mary, you are happier than you were; you are glad, are you not?"

"Yes, yes, I believe so," answered Mary. "Yes, I am sure, more happy than you can think; but do not make me speak of it, or else, perhaps, I shall cry, and you would not wish that;" and she turned away to tie on her bon-

net. "Phoebe, dear," she said, a minute or two after, "I don't know when I may see you again, but I hope some time, if I get better; we must not forget one another."

"Oh, no, I shall never forget you," cried Phoebe, jumping up to kiss her. At this moment in walked Phoebe's mother, who, as so often happens, took her by surprise at last, after having been watched for all the morning. It was a pleasure to witness their meeting—such happiness at seeing one another again! such joy at Phoebe's improved looks! "And you have been kind to my child, I know," said the mother to Mary at the first pause. This led to a short pleasant conversation, and a promise that on the first good opportunity which offered, Phoebe should come over some market-day and pay Mary a visit at Ellen Swain's. By this time Mary was ready. "And your father's below, child, waiting to see you," said the mother, "so we can all go down together;"

and so they did, Phoebe insisting on carrying Mary's basket and umbrella, which she consigned to William Johnson, as he stood at the bottom of the stairs ready to receive his charge, and smiling most good-naturedly on Phoebe, because she seemed so fond of Mary. Mary, accompanied by Ellen, had to leave them for a minute or two, to receive the doctor's last instructions, and to offer her warm thanks to him, and every one, for past kindness; and when this was over, and she had given Phoebe a kiss, she was ready to take William's arm; and turning her head for one last look at the great hall, and bestowing one sweet happy smile upon Phoebe, who stood watching her departure, the door closed behind them. "O mother! I do think she will be happy," cried Phoebe; "but I am afraid she will have a bad headache, too," she added, as she watched them from the window; "for look how fast William is making her walk, while he is talking to her, and does

not think about it. Ah, there she is telling him, I dare say, that she is not so strong as he is—oh, no, she is waiting for Ellen Swain to come up; and now they are going slowly, as they should do. Mother, do you like William Johnson?”

“I never saw him before, child,” answered her mother. “How should I like him?”

“Was that William Johnson?” said her father; “is he a stone-mason by trade?”

“Yes,” said Phoebe.

“Well, then, I knew him when they were doing the repairs of our church; he was a good lad then, and took good care of his mother when she was left with nobody else to take care of her; and he that was a good son will be a good husband, I make no doubt of it, and that is better than trusting to looks, though his are not against him.”

“Mother,” said Phoebe, “when we go, you and father must come with me to say good-

by to Simon;" and then she explained who Simon was, and where he had lived, and his sad misfortune. Presently all preparations were made, and Phœbe's parents had expressed their gratitude and thanks for the benefit their child had received, and heard the nurse's good report of her in return, as an obedient, tractable child. Having quitted the house, they all turned down the walk in search of Simon, whom they knew to be out in the air. He looked very melancholy as Phœbe approached him, for he knew she came to say good-by, so that she felt half ashamed of being so happy when he was so sad; but he was not sullen now as formerly, and was ready and glad to answer all Mrs. Freeman's kind questions about himself. To her surprise she found that his mother had been an old friend of hers, who had once lived in service with her. This made her feel a peculiar interest in her child, though

at any time she would have felt compassion for a poor boy under such circumstances ; and she lingered talking, and asking questions, and expressing regrets, till her husband warned her that they must not stay. At this moment, however, Mr. Day came up with a gentleman, whom Simon recognised as Mr. Wilson, his employer in the mill where his accident had happened. This gentleman had been from home at the time ; but on his return had come, as soon as possible, to see the poor boy. He was a kind man, and felt anxious, as he ought, to do what he could for the child, whose whole prospects had been blighted in his service. The chaplain, Mr. Day, had given him some general account of Simon's state, and the improvement he had observed since he came into the hospital, adding, however, his fear that from what he knew of his home, especially his step-mother, who proved a most unworthy person, this amendment

would have little chance of continuing, under the bad example he would see there. The boy's father, too, had been with Mr. Wilson arguing the same things, and professing his inability to do any thing for his son in his present helpless state, explaining that his wife objected to the charge in a way that convinced Mr. Wilson that his home would certainly be an unhappy one if he was made to return thither. He had just spoken of this to Mr. Day, when they came up to where Simon was, and found him in conversation with the Freemans. Mrs. Freeman was a person always to make a favourable impression; and just now, when her heart was full of Simon's trouble, and the thought that her old friend's only child should be thus unfortunate, she appeared to Mr. Wilson just the person to have the charge of the boy a little while, till some employment could be fixed upon for him, if she could be prevailed upon to undertake it. The doctor,

too, had spoken of country air as a great advantage for him in his present weak state, and this confirmed Mr. Wilson in his first thought. He therefore entered into conversation with William Freeman, and learnt where they lived, and other things; and then asked if they would be willing to take charge of Simon for a few weeks, or longer, till his health should be sufficiently restored for him to learn some trade suited to his present condition. William Freeman did not like the idea at first, and his wife was a little startled by the thought of an additional charge; but Simon, who heard the proposal, looked at her with such imploring eyes, and Phoebe, who saw what was in his mind, seconded these with such heartiness, promising to help both him and her mother as much as she could, that Mrs. Freeman agreed, only requesting Mr. Wilson to ride over and see their house, and way of living, before every thing was settled. “And one thing, sir, I

must make a point of," said William Freeman,—"if the boy comes to my house, while he stays I must have as much control over him as I have over my own children, and I should wish him to understand this.

Simon, who knew that he had not always been a boy that Freeman would like to have under his roof, here promised very humbly that if they would take him, he would be obedient, and do all he could to be as little trouble as possible.

"It is not the trouble I shall mind," said Mrs. Freeman; "there is sure to be some of that with a poor child, crippled as he is. One ought not to grudge that for a motherless child; but I can't keep him unless he is conformable and well-behaved, which as this good gentleman (curtseying to the chaplain) speaks a good word for him, I hope he will be."

Simon looked brighter and happier after this decision than Phoebe had ever seen him, "Who

would have thought," she whispered to him, "that you would help us to make our May-garlands, after all?"

"Yes," he added, "and I believe I shall know where to look for the flowers, though it is so long ago; and I shall be able to go about then, for I can use my crutches a great deal better than I did that first day, when I was so cross, and had nearly sent you away from me. I said then that nobody could help me, and nobody could do me any good; I hope I shall never have such bad thoughts again; for how kind every body has been to me, and how happy I feel at this minute, in spite of these things," said he, smiling, as he shook his crutches, "that I thought I should never bear the sight of."



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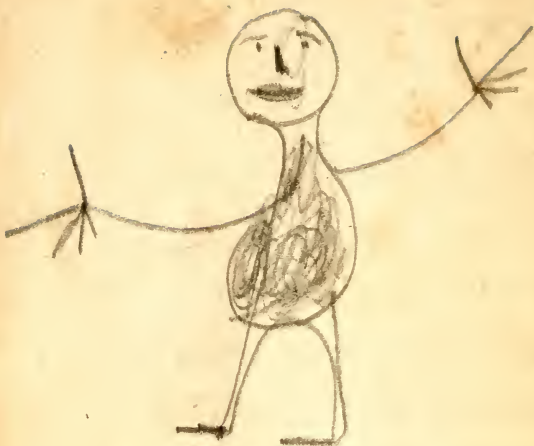


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